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ABSTRACT

This booklet presents information on New Zealand early childhood education services and primary schools specifically for Korean immigrants. The booklet is based on interviews with 30 Korean families who recently decided to settle in New Zealand. Their experiences with New Zealand early childhood and primary schools are represented. The immigrants contributed ideas about the inclusion of information that future Korean immigrants would find helpful. The booklet discusses factors in choosing a primary school, including school enrollment schemes, religious values, presence of Korean students, support for non-English speaking students, students with special needs, and school enrollment and admission policies. The publication examines characteristics of New Zealand primary schools, including school management, curriculum, the multicultural basis of schools, acknowledging cultural differences in teaching and learning, discipline, testing, homework, school buildings, and school expenses. Korean parents discussed the opportunities available for them for involvement in the schools, the differences between New Zealand and Korean childrearing practices, and the benefits and problems of life in New Zealand. (JPB)

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A guide for Korean parents in New Zealand

Early childhood education services and primary schools

Margery Renwick

NZCER

2

Your children: Our schools

A guide for Korean parents in New Zealand

Early childhood education services and primary schools

Margery Renwick

NEW ZEALAND COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
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The Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) has translated the report into Korean and published it as a limited edition. In association with this project KEDI organised a Korea-New Zealand seminar on educational development in Seoul as a way of enhancing co-operation between the 2 countries.

I would like to thank the many Korean parents in Auckland and Wellington who have shared their experiences with me, and the teachers who gave their time to talk with me. I would also like to thank Mrs Jee Young Song (Kim) and Mr Chulwo Lee for assisting with the interviews, and Fay Swann (NZCER) for editorial assistance.

Whom we interviewed

We interviewed 30 Korean families in Auckland and Wellington. We usually spoke to mothers but sometimes both parents were present. When fathers were present, they usually spoke because they were more confident at speaking English than their wives. The parents had children aged from 18 months to 17 years, both boys and girls. The families had been in New Zealand for varying lengths of time ranging from 4 months to 8 years. A number of the fathers had had trouble finding employment in the field for which they were trained. This was understandably distressing for the family. The inability of the father to fulfil his traditional role as breadwinner sometimes led to tension in the family. However, there were some positive spin-offs. Fathers were able to spend more time with their children, and a number of them had become quite closely involved in their children's school. Several had become the "link" or spokesperson for Koreans in their community and helped to introduce others to the school. Spare time had also enabled several parents to do extra things for the school such as translate the school newsletters into Korean. At least 2 parents had been co-opted on to school boards of trustees. Free time also enabled parents to attend classes to improve their English, usually at local polytechnics.

We also visited several primary schools and kindergartens in Auckland and Wellington where there were Korean pupils, and talked with staff. Other teachers we talked to by phone.

Some terms

The term New Zealander is used in this booklet to describe all people with New Zealand resident status. The Koreans we spoke to commonly referred to New Zealanders as "Kiwis". Non-Maori New Zealanders are also referred to as "Pakeha".

Early childhood education services and primary schools

This booklet is concerned with New Zealand early childhood education services and primary schools. It does not include secondary schools. This is because of the limited funds available for the project. It is hoped that information about secondary schools will be included at a later date.

Introduction

You have decided to settle in New Zealand. You have probably thought about it for some time. Perhaps you have visited the country previously, or other family members and friends have already settled here. You may have wanted to go to Australia but weren't accepted and so decided New Zealand was next best! Besides New Zealand has a "clean green" image, is much less polluted than Korea, and is regarded as a stable, safe society.

A major reason for you deciding to come to New Zealand is probably because there are so many people in Korea. You are concerned about your children's future. Schools and classes in Korea are large and you think there is too much competition—pressure, pressure, pressure. You may be thinking like the people we interviewed that in Korea:

There are so many people we are treated like robots.

Pressure is also felt in the family. Everyone has to work so hard and for such long hours that there is not enough time left for family life.

However, moving to a new country can also be stressful. What do you know about New Zealand early childhood education centres and primary schools? How can you help your children settle in quickly and happily?

This booklet is based on interviews with 30 Korean families who, like you, have recently decided to settle in New Zealand. They, like you, have been greatly concerned to make good choices about their children's schooling. They told us about their experiences with New Zealand early childhood education centres and primary schools and suggested things future Korean migrants would find helpful.

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New Zealand early childhood education

New Zealand early childhood programmes are less structured than similar programmes in Korea, but activities that look informal often have a set purpose.

Types of early childhood education (ECE) services

Early childhood education is well developed in New Zealand, and most children attend an early childhood education centre for at least a year before starting school at the age of 5. Many of these children are enrolled in a state kindergarten from the age of 3 to 5. The younger children usually attend 3 sessions a week in the afternoons and the 4-year-olds daily morning sessions.

Other children attend playcentres or childcare centres, some of which are also described as private kindergartens. Playcentres are parent co-operatives where parents are responsible for the management and supervision of sessions. Children from birth to school age attend for half-day sessions.

Many Maori children attend childcare centres called kohanga reo (language nests), where they learn the Maori language; in some places similar centres, called a'oga amata, are run for Samoan children.

Childcare centres are typically open all day. In some districts there are also informal playgroups available for children under 2 years of age.

There are differences between the various kinds of early childhood centres but there are also marked similarities in the kinds of programmes they run for children. While there are varying degrees of structure to the programmes, the vast majority are based on a philosophy of children learning through play and having a free choice of activities. The *Early Childhood Curriculum: Te Whāriki* outlines the current curriculum for early childhood services. Copies of the early childhood curriculum should be available through early childhood centres. You may also be interested in a booklet written for Asian parents to help them understand New Zealand early childhood education. Called *Early Childhood Education Is* Fun!, by Song Lam and Jannie van Hees, it describes the indoor and outdoor activities typically available at a New Zealand early childhood centre, for example, play dough, blocks, pasting, books, music, carpentry, and water play. If you would like more information about how to choose the most suitable kind of early childhood education for you and your child, you should find a recent publication *Choices in Early Childhood Education* helpful (Early Childhood Development Unit, 1996).

The Korean parents in New Zealand who were using these kinds of early childhood services were satisfied with their children's experiences there. Several parents had started with a playcentre and found, as New Zealand mothers do, that the playcentre was an excellent meeting place for mothers as well as providing a supportive and stimulating environment for children to get to know each other. As one mother said:

> An advantage of playcentre is that parents and children learn together. New Zealand is a new world which both mother and child have to understand. We enjoyed being able to go to playcentre together.

These parents had later moved on to a kindergarten because they thought that kindergarten would be a better preparation for school. There were more older children at kindergarten, and they thought the kindergarten teachers were more professionally trained. (In fact, all early childhood educators are required to be qualified and trained.) The mother thought her daughter would have more opportunity to learn English at a kindergarten. This is a matter of opinion, but moving children from playcentre to kindergarten is a common practice in Auckland. Those parents with children at kindergarten were certainly pleased with how well their children had settled in.

The Korean parents using childcare or private kindergartens did so for one of 3 reasons:

1. Because the centres were open for longer hours, which was important for them because both parents were working.
2. Because there was a lower ratio of children to adults.
3. Because they thought the programme was superior and a better preparation for school. This usually meant that they thought there was more formal teaching.

One family had chosen a Montessori early childhood education centre because they liked the Montessori philosophy with its emphasis on art and music.

Early childhood programmes

Because New Zealand early childhood programmes are less structured than similar programmes in Korea, parents may find it hard to understand that teachers do, in fact, plan and evaluate programmes. Activities that look quite informal may have a set purpose, for example, play with counters and blocks specifically to develop number and seriation skills.

Korean parents may have had only limited experience of early childhood education services in Korea because their children were too young to attend. They do not necessarily know about recent changes in Korea. They certainly think the emphasis on free play is more marked in New Zealand. Some activities such as finger painting

are quite new to them. They may also be surprised that teachers make much use of recycled goods, for example, boxes for model making. Art materials are freely available for children, and this may seem extravagant to Koreans.

One mother said how excited her daughter was to be able to use real tools for carpentry which she did not think would happen in Korea. In Korea real tools would not be available and girls would not be expected to use them. This same parent was surprised that children were able to climb trees and that there was so much emphasis on the study of animals and natural things. The children had planted barley seeds and watched them germinate. Even more surprising was the way children were able to play with the pet mice. In Korea children would only be able to look at them in a cage, but at this kindergarten not only did the children play with them, but the mice even had human names!

Children at early childhood centres often sing songs. One playcentre mother was embarrassed because she wasn't able to join in. She got herself a tape from the library to learn some songs and advises other Korean parents to try to learn some English nursery rhymes and lullabies and share these with her children.

Kindergartens

Before children can start at a kindergarten, parents must put their name on a waiting list. New Zealand parents usually do this at the age of 2 years. There are roll pressures in many kindergartens, particularly in Auckland, and some Korean parents have been disappointed that their child has not been able to start at as young an age as they had hoped. Several have offered to pay extra money to get their child enrolled. This is unacceptable in New Zealand. Having to wait your turn on a waiting list is not a form of discrimination against migrants; New Zealand families have to do the same. Alternative early childhood services are often available which may provide similar educational benefits. It is important to remember that if your young child has to wait to get into an early childhood education centre, parents are the first teachers of their own children. If your child is at home with you, he or she will also be learning valuable things.

If you are disappointed at the length of time your child has to wait before attending, it would be a good idea to visit the kindergarten regularly with your child. Children on the waiting list are welcome at most kindergartens as long as their mother or father attends with them. This helps the child to settle in and would also give you a chance to get to know the kindergarten. On these visits make sure your child knows where the toilet is and is comfortable using it. Problems with toileting can lead to children not wishing to attend, particularly if they do not know how to ask in English.

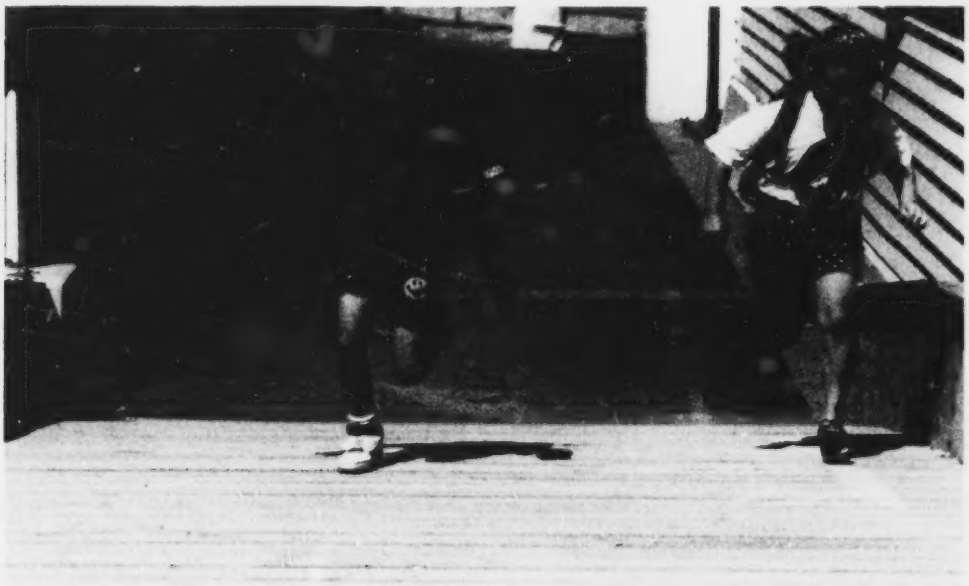
Teachers regard their kindergartens as friendly places and like parents to feel welcome. They are understandably busy with 3 teachers and 45 children at a session, but they try to make parents feel welcome and to introduce parents to each other. Several teachers spoke about how lonely they thought Korean mothers could be. A number of fathers return to Korea on regular business trips, so the mother can be left without many friends and find it difficult to meet others because of her lack of English. In these situations the kindergarten can be a good place to spend time.

Once your child has been enrolled he or she will be expected to attend regularly. Kindergartens are staffed according to the number of children who attend each session. Teachers get upset if children are not regular in their attendance. Several teachers said Korean parents were not always good at giving advance warning that their children would be going away on holiday or moving from the centre or district. This makes it difficult for teachers to plan their programmes effectively, and is not fair on other families who may be waiting their turn to start.

Some Korean parents have had difficulty accepting that New Zealand teachers, while being the professional leaders at the kindergarten, also perform quite menial tasks, for example, washing dishes and sweeping the floor. Teachers say Korean parents have become quite agitated and have said things like:

> You must not clean the floor, because you are the teacher.

Teachers do get help with these tasks from aides and parents, but they also accept that it is part of their responsibility to keep the kindergarten clean and tidy.



Choosing a primary school

Several Korean parents spent a lot of time trying to decide which primary school to send their child to, then decided the best idea was to go to the school nearest their house.

You will no doubt meet other Korean families when you arrive in New Zealand and they will help you to decide at which school to enrol your child. It is difficult for parents who do not feel confident about their English to visit many schools. Fortunately you may not have to. If you do visit schools try to bring a more confident bilingual person with you—someone you feel you can trust and feel comfortable with.

In Korea parents try hard to get their children into the best schools, particularly those known to prepare children for university. New immigrants are sometimes surprised to find that state primary schools in New Zealand seem so much the same, although it is also true that some schools are preferred to others. Several Korean parents said they had spent a lot of time trying to decide which primary school to send their child to and had then decided the best idea was to go to the school nearest to their house. This is what most New Zealand parents also decide. As with New Zealand children, the greatest advantage of going to the local school is that your child is more likely to make friends nearby. It also means there will be no transport problems.

Some Korean parents chose a primary school because it was the largest in the district. They thought there would be more competition for their child who would then work harder. This is a strange idea for most New Zealand parents who usually prefer smaller primary schools because they think the teachers will give their children more individual attention.

Most New Zealand children attend the nearest state-funded primary school There are also integrated schools (usually Catholic), which used to be private but are now also state funded although the buildings and land are privately owned, as well as independent or private schools which charge fees although they also receive some state funding. We spoke to a number of Korean parents who had intended to enrol their children at private schools before they left Korea but had changed their mind after they arrived in New Zealand and had visited state primary schools. As with most New Zealand families their children now attend the local state school.

School enrolment schemes

It is government policy that, wherever possible, parents should be allowed to choose the primary school which their children will attend. Most children will be able to be enrolled at their neighbourhood school. However, sometimes this is not possible because of overcrowding. If a primary school is in danger of becoming overcrowded the board of trustees may put an enrolment scheme in place listing various criteria by which children may be enrolled.

At present there are about 410 primary schools which operate an enrolment scheme. This may affect Korean families because most of these schools are in Auckland, which is also the city with the largest Korean population in New Zealand. Some Korean families have had to wait much longer than expected to get their child into the school of their choice. If your child's name has to be put on a waiting list, this is because of high roll numbers and does not mean Koreans are discriminated against.

EXAMPLES OF ENROLMENT CRITERIA

- Living within a specific geographic locality designated by various streets
- Having to enrol children by a certain date in the year
- Having other family members already at the school

If you are having difficulty in enrolling your child at any reasonably convenient school, you should contact the local office of the Ministry of Education.

Religious values

Koreans who are Christians may look for a state school where there is religious instruction. As one father said, "Being a Christian is more important than being a Korean". New Zealand state primary schools are secular. Teachers in these schools are prohibited by law from teaching religion during school hours. However, because schools are open for longer than the required minimum of 2 hours each morning and 2 hours each afternoon, some boards of trustees allow school buildings to be used for religious instruction outside compulsory school hours. The legislation concerning secular education does not apply to integrated schools (usually Catholic) or fee-paying private schools. These schools may teach religion and indeed the special character of these schools means religion is part of the entire school day. There are Catholic schools in most districts but they usually have full rolls and have the legal right to limit the enrolment of non-Catholic pupils to usually 5 percent to 10 percent of the school roll.

Schools with or without other Korean students

The parents we spoke with were divided in their views as to whether or not it was better for their children to attend schools with other Koreans. Some thought their children would become too dependent on other Korean-speaking children and would not practise their English sufficiently. Most realised that for young children to have the support of other children who understood their language helped them to settle in.

There are several schools with quite high Korean rolls in Auckland, and teachers have made an effort to welcome Korean families. One principal described her school as having a "very positive culture towards migrants". In this school, small practical things have been done to make sure Korean children feel welcome. For example, there is a Korean box which contains a number of pictures about Korea, as well as common Korean utensils which new pupils use as the basis for some of their first lessons in English.

Support for non-English-speaking students

The amount of extra help your child receives with his or her English may depend on the number of non-English-speaking children in the school. There is a government scheme which provides extra funding for schools which have pupils for whom English is not their first language. The scheme is partially funded through the migrant settlement service fee which you are required to pay on entry to New Zealand. Some of the funds are also used for teacher professional development to assist teachers to understand the needs of non-English-speaking students.

It is important for Korean parents to understand that the recent increase in migration to New Zealand has placed a great strain on teachers. Teachers are not only coping with Korean children but may also have children from Iraq, Iran, China, Hong Kong, and Vietnam, and many other countries. Korean teachers do not have to teach children from such a range of backgrounds.

In order to apply for extra funding to assist non-English-speaking students, schools divide students into various categories, for example:

- Those who cannot understand greetings, simple instructions, questions, or statements in English.
- Those who are able to converse a little in English but have minimal reading or writing skills.
- Those with adequate oral English but who need reading and writing support.

Schools which have a number of students who do not speak English fluently usually have a teacher who is able to give extra help to these students in small groups several times a week. In one school, for example, where 25 percent of the students are non-English-speaking, and 80 percent of these are Korean, the school's policy is for a specialist teacher to take children in pairs for 2 or 3 sessions of 30 minutes each week. In a second school, a specialist teacher spends about 40 minutes every day with small groups of about 4 non-English-speaking children. Primary schools do not have language laboratories.

Various terms are used to speak about students from non-English-speaking backgrounds:

ESOL	■	English for speakers of other languages
NESB	■	Children from a non-English-speaking background
ESL	■	Children who speak English as a second language
LBOTE	■	Language background other than English

You should ask the school principal about the school programmes for non-English-speaking students.

Students with special needs

Special education services are available for children with disabilities, or learning and behavioural difficulties. Parents of children with special education needs have the same rights to enrol their children at the school of their choice as other parents. If possible children with physical or other disabilities are enrolled with children in ordinary classes but they may also be enrolled in a special school or classes attached to the school. If you need further information, the principal of the local primary school should be able to help you.

School enrolment and admission

In Korea children start primary school at the of age 6[1] (in Western age) in annual intakes. The school year begins in March. New Zealand has a quite different system. Here the school year begins in February, but most 5-year-old children start school throughout the year on their fifth birthday. In some schools this policy has been modified to take children in groups, for example, once a month. If you arrive in New Zealand with older children, they can be admitted to school at any time during the year.

When you enrol your child you will be asked various bits of family information:

- Names, date of birth, address, telephone number
- Passport details for yourself and your child
- Information about health and dental checks
- Name and telephone number of your doctor

The School Dental Health Service and the Public Health Nurse will visit the school and probably examine your child during his or her first year.

All schools have an enrolment form but they are likely to be less complex than those provided for schools by the government in Korea. Some schools now have bilingual Korean/English forms for gathering information. This will help you understand and give better information. It is important you share as much information about your child's background and present needs as possible. The school also likes to have the name of a neighbour or friend they can contact in an emergency. You may find it helpful to bring a Korean interpreter to the school when you enrol your child.

[1] Korean children are regarded as being 1 year old at birth; New Zealand children are not described as 1-year-olds until they are 12 months old. In effect this means that in Korea children start school at the age of 6 (in New Zealand terms).

Before you enrol your child most schools would be happy for you and your child to visit the school and even spend some time together in the classroom. At this time it is also helpful if you can show your child around the playground. Make sure he or she knows where the drinking fountains and toilets are. The toilets may be different from those your child is used to. The school will advise you about what stationery and books you need to buy for your child when you enrol. On their first day children are likely to need pencils, pens, and felt pens. It is helpful if they can have a Korean book to read. A Korean/English dictionary is always useful.

The hours children will be expected to attend school are different in New Zealand from Korea. In Korea when children start school they attend from 8.30 a.m. or 9.00 a.m. until noon. The time in the afternoon is taken up by children attending extra classes for things such as piano and art. By level 6, children in Korea will be at school until 3 p.m. In New Zealand children usually attend from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. for the whole of their primary schooling. In some schools 5-year-old children may only attend until 2 p.m.

SCHOOL HOURS AND TERMS

- School opens from 9 in the morning to 3 in the afternoon
- Sometimes 5-year-olds finish at 2 in the afternoon
- The school year has 4 terms of 10 weeks
- There are breaks of 2 weeks between the terms
- There is a summer holiday of 6 weeks

Once enrolled children are expected to attend school daily except when they are ill or in exceptional circumstances. However, some Korean parents have thought that teachers in New Zealand are less strict about attendance than in Korea, and that New Zealand parents keep their children at home for what Koreans would regard as only minor illnesses.

The primary school year is divided into 4 terms of 10 weeks. There is a 6-week summer holiday and three 2-week breaks between terms.

Children settling into school

It took my daughter a year to settle in. It was like she was deaf and blind. There were so many new things to learn. English was the main problem.

In New Zealand teachers really understand education and children. They are very flexible. I am amazed at how kind the teachers are.

Most of the Korean parents we spoke to said their children had now settled into school well, but it did take time, especially for children who were not comfortable speaking English. About 3 months was a typical period of time mentioned by parents but a few spoke of periods of more than a year. The younger the child, the easier it usually was. Because it does take time for children to adjust to a strange system of schooling in a society which is also unfamiliar, the Korean parents we interviewed urge other new immigrant parents to try to teach their children how to cope with stress.

All children—even Kiwi children—can experience difficulty settling into school at some time. Children do tease each other. Children may have particular problems at playtime, when teachers are not nearby. Children may feel lonely because they have no one to play with. Children may also be cruel to each other and tease others who they think look different from themselves. Your child may have special difficulties. It would be a good idea if you talked about this possibility with your child. One Korean mother said her child cried because the other children said she had "Chinese eyes". Another said her daughter came home and said other children had called her "ugly". She did not know what "ugly" meant and was very upset when her mother explained the word to her. Her mother went on to talk about the ways Asian and Western peoples look different from each other. Her daughter is not so upset now she understands more.

Two of the parents of primary children we spoke with said that their children had experienced racism at school. Others thought that if racism was a problem it was more likely to be with older children at secondary school. The primary teachers we spoke to did not think there was any overt racism in their school. They thought children from Asia were accepted by the other children, and settled in well. However, although Korean parents may not think their primary-aged children have suffered from racism, they as parents have certainly experienced "cultural misunderstandings", and the parents themselves have felt self-conscious when neighbours or other parents at the school did not respond to their greetings.

Virtually all the Korean parents we spoke with said their child was happy with their classroom teachers. Two parents with older children in the family referred to what they considered to be racist incidents with teachers. One said their son thought a teacher was biased against Asians because the student was criticised for actions which were accepted from Kiwi students. However, this boy stressed that the teacher was in a minority and that most were very fair to Asian students. In fact one of the things he liked best about New Zealand schools was the attitude of teachers to students and the fact that teachers respected students' opinions. Two other parents thought their children had been unfairly blamed for incidents which had also involved Pakeha students. Another teenage Korean student said Pacific Island students hassled him and said that he should go back to his own country.

It is hard to know what weight to put on these incidents. While the incidents were unpleasant, parents did not appear to regard them as particularly serious. One or two said that initially their child did not have a good enough command of English to recognise unpleasant remarks, but as they became more proficient in English they realised children had been teasing them and making rude comments.

Most children felt accepted by the other children. The most important factor in helping young children settle into school is for them to have a friend. You may be able to help by encouraging your child to invite a Kiwi friend to your home to play. This too may take time. One parent commented:

> My daughter has had problems making friends and is lonely. There are not many Koreans nearby and she doesn't play with the neighbourhood children much. She has made friends with a New Zealand child but this child has closer Kiwi friends and doesn't want to play with my daughter as much as my daughter would like.

Another parent said his son enjoyed school so much he went off each morning at 7.30 a.m. and regularly brought Kiwi friends home to stay overnight. However, it is also true that Korean children are more likely to play with other Koreans than to mix with Kiwi children, particularly out of school hours. Some schools help the children to make friends by arranging a "buddy" system. The "buddy" becomes a special friend of the new arrival and makes sure he or she knows the way around the school and understands what to do in class. Teachers believe that making friends with migrant children is an enriching experience for children. New Zealand children learn and benefit from the process.

Lack of English language skills is the main reason Korean children have problems settling into school. They find it difficult to be understood by other children and have problems understanding the teachers, particularly following instructions. Everybody talks so fast! Your children will need lots of practice. If you are uncertain about your own English you may feel it is difficult for you to help. Several parents said their children's English had quickly outstripped their own! Others said they had learnt their own English from Americans and they now found the New Zealand accent and usage difficult to follow. One small thing that puzzled them was the way New Zealanders write the date with the day first, followed by the month and then the year.

Korean parents sometimes worry if they are not able to talk to their children in English. However, most teachers think it is quite appropriate for parents to talk to their children in their own language. The children should have sufficient practice in English at school.

If your own English is limited you may find it particularly stressful if your child has difficulty settling into school. Several Korean parents spoke of their own anxiety when their child was tearful and did not want to go to school. Their own lack of English meant they could not talk about their child's problems with the teacher.

Korean parents understandably wish to ensure their children maintain their own culture and language which is the reason they usually give for speaking Korean at home.[2] However, if your children have at least learnt basic New Zealand greetings, and how to say "please" and "thank you", they are likely to feel more comfortable in a strange environment.

Even children who have learnt English in Korea may find it difficult coping in a New Zealand classroom. Some students have been put into, or have themselves chosen to go into, New Zealand classes at a lower level than they would be in their home country in order to catch up with their English, for example, a year at an intermediate school before going to secondary school. Some parents have felt it necessary to arrange for a private tutor to help with their child's English.

To assist with language problems some schools have a list of pupils who can act as interpreters in specified languages.

Food at school may be part of a child's settling-in problem. Your child will be used to eating rice during the day. Most New Zealand children eat bread sandwiches and your child might want to do the same so that they don't feel different. Mind you, they mightn't like sandwiches much. As one Korean parent explained, her daughter took sandwiches every day but usually gave them away to other children! She only ate fruit herself. Children can be teased about food and the smell of food can be a problem. Your child may not like the smell of New Zealand meat. New Zealand children may have trouble with the smell of Korean food, particularly garlic. On the other hand New Zealand children can be envious of the food eaten by Korean children and their use of chopsticks. Most New Zealand children will be quite accepting of this.

One thing that surprises Korean parents and children is that, except in very bad weather, children are expected to eat outdoors. Korean children have complained about being shut out of the classroom at lunchtime, thinking this is a form of racism. This is not the case, but if children have been used to eating indoors with friends in Korea they may find it more difficult to find a group to sit with outside. If you think your child is not well enough to eat outside in bad weather you could write a note to the teacher to explain.

Some schools have lunch schemes whereby children can buy food at school. If you are interested, you'll need to talk to the teacher about this.

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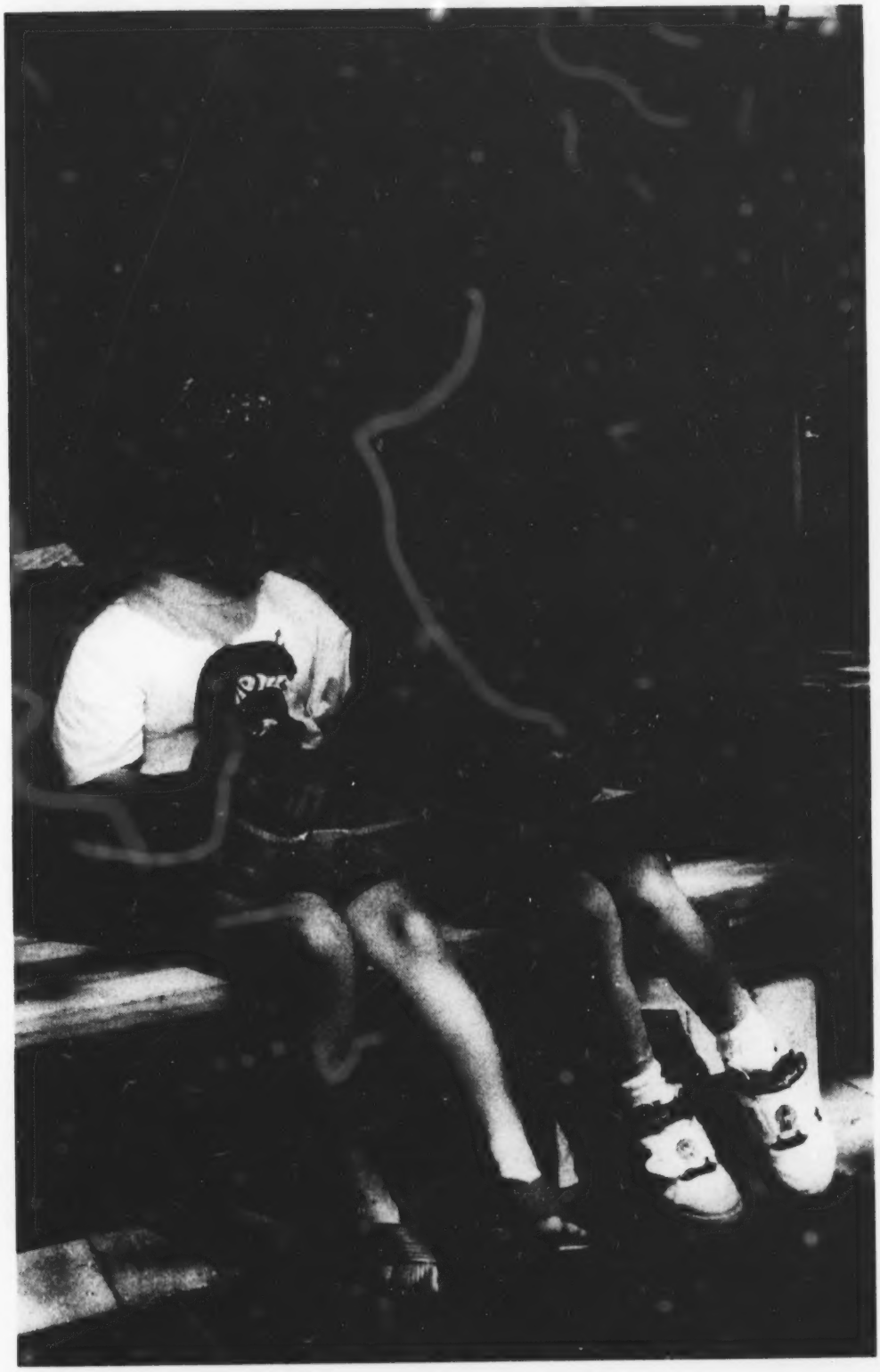
[2] There is a Korean school held on Saturday morning in Auckland, and classes for Koreans in Wellington. The main aim of the school is to ensure Korean children maintain the Korean language. In Auckland there are quite a few New Zealand families who also want to learn Korean and attend the Korean school for this purpose.



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Some characteristics of New Zealand primary schools

Korean parents say one of the biggest differences between New Zealand and Korean primary schools is the New Zealand system is ***child-centred*** *whereas in Korea the education system is* ***teacher-centred****.*

School organisation

Primary schools usually cater for children from the age of 5 until the end of their sixth year of schooling. In some districts it is possible for children to stay on at the same school for a further 2 years. (For a summary of the organisation of the complete early childhood education and school system, see diagram 1.) In many districts, especially in city areas, children go on to an intermediate school for the last 2 years of primary schooling. Most children at this stage will be aged 11 or 12. Traditionally, primary schools have been divided into sections labelled "junior" school for the first 3 years, and "middle" and "senior" school for the next 2 periods of 2 years. Classes within these main sections are often grouped together and called syndicates. Children are normally promoted from one class to the next at the end of each calendar year according to their age. From 1996, children's class levels are described in terms of years, i.e., year 1 to 6. In each school most classrooms also have a room number. Children are often identified according to the number of the room they are in, for example, room 6 or 10. This does not indicate their class level.

In Korean schools there are always many classes at each age level. Because New Zealand schools are smaller than Korean schools, there may be only one or two classes at each age level. There will be children of a wide range of abilities in the same room.

The number of children in each class is fewer in New Zealand than in Korea. In primary schools there are usually about 30 children or fewer with one teacher. Teaching methods are less formal in New Zealand than in Korea.

While many classrooms in New Zealand contain just one class level, some New Zealand schools are built and run on an "open plan" system. This means there is a large open space divided into areas for various teaching activities rather than separate classrooms.

School management

The school principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school. Since 1989, all state and integrated schools have been governed by boards of trustees. Trustees are usually parents elected by the community. The school principal and a staff representative are also members of the board of trustees. The board of trustees is

responsible for establishing a school charter which sets out the aims and objectives of the school, and then to see that these aims and objectives are met according to the board's policies.

Parents are encouraged to stand for election for the board of trustees. The composition of the board should reflect the composition of the students at the school. If there are a number of Korean students at the school, it would be helpful if there was a Korean parent on the board.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- School principal
- Representative of staff
- Between 3 and 7 persons, usually parents, elected by the community
- Members co-opted for specific expertise (e.g., financial), these must number fewer than the elected members
- An integrated school may have up to 4 appointed proprietor's representatives, the number of elected members must be greater than the co-opted and appointed combined
- In secondary schools with form 4 or above, a student trustee may be elected

Multicultural schools

In Korea all schools are attended by Koreans only, apart from a few foreign schools set up by foreigners for overseas students. New Zealand is very different. There are schools where most of the students are Pakeha New Zealanders, but many schools have multiethnic rolls, with a majority of pupils from other cultures. These schools reflect the multicultural nature of New Zealand society. At first this may seem strange to you. One Korean parent we spoke to was surprised at the number of Greeks, Italians, Indians, Chinese, and Samoans at the school. Another was concerned by the number of Maori and Pacific Island pupils, until he found that this meant that the school had a special teacher trained to help non-English-speaking students, and his daughter was getting regular extra help with her English in a small group. She was doing very well and loved going to school.

A problem some Korean parents may have is that they think that if there are many Maori students at the school, their child will have to learn Maori as well as English. It is common in primary schools for children to learn some Maori words. The school curriculum recognises and values the unique position of Maori in New Zealand society. Maori are the tangata whenua (original occupants) and all students should have the opportunity to acquire some knowledge of Maori language and culture. Maori myths

Diagram 1
THE NEW ZEALAND EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL SYSTEM

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SERVICES
(Preschools)
0–5 years

State Kindergartens 3–5 years	Childcare Centres and Private Kindergartens	Playcentres Parent Co-operatives	Kohanga Reo (instruction given in Maori)	Pacific Island Early Childhood Centres

PRIMARY AND INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS
5–12 years

Full Primary Schools Years 1–8	Contributing Primary Schools Years 1–6	(Junior School followed by standards 1–4)
	Intermediate Schools Years 7 and 8	(Forms 1 and 2)

SECONDARY SCHOOLS
12–17 years

Years 9–13 (Forms 3–7)

There may be variations in school organisation particularly in rural areas.

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and legends, and stories from the Pacific Islands, are an integral part of classroom reading materials. Maori and English are the two official languages of New Zealand. Some people call New Zealand by its Maori name, Aotearoa. It might help your child to learn a few Maori words at school, for example, Kia ora (Hello), kai (food).

The Treaty of Waitangi

All public educational institutions, including early childhood education centres and primary schools, are required to have a charter. The Education Act (1989) states that all school charters must have:

> the aim of developing policies and practices that reflect New Zealand's cultural diversity, and the unique position of the Maori culture. (p. 41)

Most school charters include a section on how they intend to acknowledge the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in the curriculum.

The Treaty of Waitangi is the founding document of New Zealand, firstly as a British settlement, then as a self-governing colony, and now as an autonomous member of the Commonwealth of Nations. The Maori chiefs who signed the Treaty ceded the sovereignty of the country to Queen Victoria and her successors. In return, the Queen guaranteed to protect the Maori people in the full chieftainship of their lands, forests, fisheries, and their other taonga (sacred treasures) for as long as they wished to keep them. Both sides expected to benefit from the Treaty. It gave British and other non-Maori settlers the right to live here, and it promised Maori the protection of their rights and interests. But the record of our history shows that these promises of protection did not prevent the domination of Maori by Pakeha and the accumulation of many Maori grievances since 1840.

The Treaty of Waitangi is unusual in being written in the languages of both signatories. Important differences of meaning are embedded in the English and Maori versions of the Treaty. During the last 25 years, there has been continuing public debate about the significance of these differences, and what New Zealanders should do to address Maori grievances.

The curriculum

The school curriculum, including assessment of student learning, is in a process of change. There is an official policy for teaching, learning, and assessment in New Zealand schools referred to as the New Zealand Curriculum. The New Zealand Curriculum includes 7 essential learning areas. These are:

- language and languages
- mathematics
- science
- technology
- social sciences
- the arts
- health and physical wellbeing

The New Zealand Curriculum also specifies 8 groupings of essential skills to be developed by all students across the whole curriculum while they are at school. These are:

- communication skills
- numeracy skills
- information skills
- problem-solving skills
- self-management and competitive skills
- social and co-operative skills
- physical skills
- work and study skills

There is a published curriculum statement for each of the 7 learning areas from which teachers prepare their learning programmes. Each school is required to have a "balanced" or "whole" curriculum. While the same curriculum covers all schools, local schools also have flexibility as to how it is interpreted. Korean parents commented on how much more flexible it was than the national curriculum in Korea. They also commented on the wide range of learning activities there were in primary classrooms, including a focus on contemporary social issues.

The learning areas are not necessarily broken up into separate subjects at the primary level as is typical of the Korean curriculum. We refer to an "integrated curriculum" where the boundaries between subjects are linked and blended. The teaching of English is often referred to as "whole language" learning and includes reading and writing. There are strong links between all aspects of language learning. The main emphasis in primary schools is on meaning. Technical skills such as spelling, punctuation, and handwriting, while important, are emphasised less. Children are encouraged to be active participants in language learning and to understand the content of what they are reading and writing.

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Some teachers of older Korean children said their written English tended to progress more quickly than spoken English, perhaps because Korean children were more reluctant than New Zealand children to share their ideas orally. Compared with New Zealand children, their written language also tended to be very formal, probably reflecting the fact that Korean parents were taught in an "old fashioned" formal manner which emphasised grammar rather than the everyday usage typical of a native speaker of English.

Several Korean parents with older children, including those at intermediate schools, said their children had problems with essay writing. Students had been used to memorising material set by teachers and responding to short-answer questions, but had much less experience of creative writing and writing at length in English. Older students who have learnt English in Korea may be upset because their level of English is not good enough for them to cope. Parents who worry that inadequate English could mean their children fail to understand and fall behind should ask whether extra tuition might be available. Most children, however, soon adapt to the different teaching style.

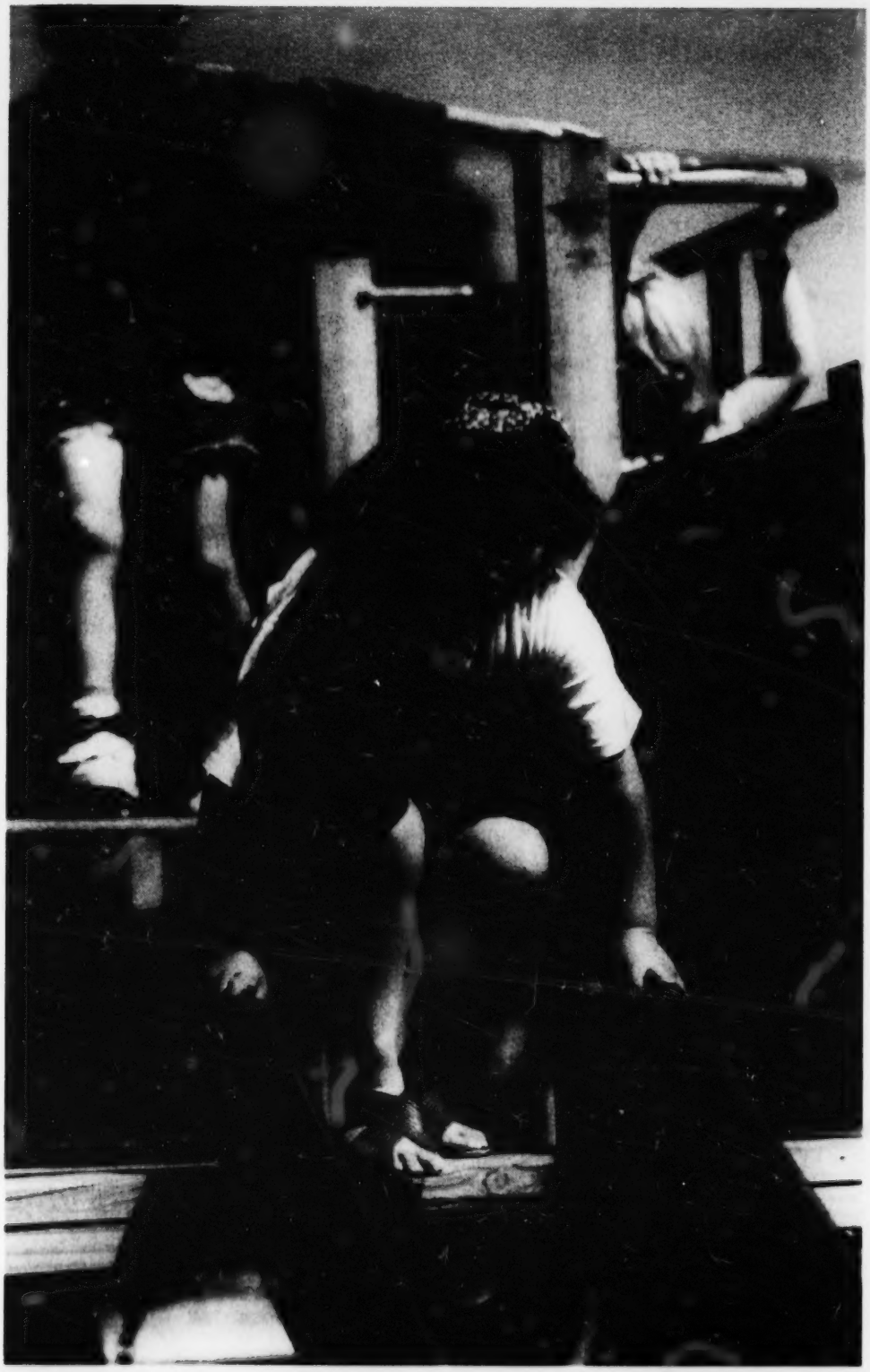
One problem for Korean parents is that while there is a New Zealand Curriculum there are not necessarily set textbooks which teachers use to teach it. In Korea the curriculum is carefully set out step by step in a textbook which the teacher goes through very systematically. New Zealand teachers use many books and do not use them in the same methodical manner. This means that Korean parents are unsure how they can best help their children because they are not clear which stage they are up to in any one subject.

Some Koreans may feel there is insufficient emphasis on academic subjects. They are concerned that too much learning is based on play and will have a negative effect on their child's academic performance. However, most indicated that they preferred the more "creative" emphasis of New Zealand schooling and were pleased to move away from a "knowledge-orientated" system. They acknowledged that the New Zealand system was probably healthier for a well-rounded child. As one parent commented:

> There are different aims to education in New Zealand. In Korea the aim of schools is to prepare children to go to university. New Zealand education is for the whole of life. There is not the same emphasis on academic success. That is why we came to New Zealand.

New Zealand parents and teachers also want children to do well academically. Less emphasis on examinations may make it appear to new settlers that there is less concern about academic excellence. It may also be true that New Zealand parents are less inclined than Korean parents to believe that academic success is necessary for their children to be successful adults. This attitude may be changing in a tighter job market.

When we talked with New Zealand teachers about Korean children they commented on how quick they were to learn academically. They were usually particularly



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competent at mathematics and had obviously had help at home. A number of Korean parents also spoke of their children's ability in mathematics. Most felt they were ahead of New Zealand children and several said, as a consequence, their children were bored with mathematics at school and should have special higher-level teaching. This may well be the case. It may also be that the methods of studying mathematics differ between the two countries. One Korean parent said that in New Zealand there is more focus on the application of mathematical concepts to daily life, whereas in Korea the ability of children to solve more difficult mathematical problems is important. A contrary view held by several teachers was that while Korean children tended to be advanced in mechanical mathematical skills they were less knowledgeable about mathematical processes. One Korean parent supported this view saying:

> In New Zealand, mathematical principles are most important. How was this answer arrived at? In Korea the important thing is the correct answer. The problem-solving approach (how) is regarded as more important than the correct answer (what) in New Zealand.

New Zealanders are a sports-loving people and there is a good deal of emphasis on sport and physical education in schools. Several teachers said Korean children did not participate as much as New Zealand children, except perhaps for basketball. One thing some Korean parents have had difficulty with, is the importance placed on learning to swim. Because New Zealanders spend a lot of time near water, swimming is a compulsory part of the programme in most New Zealand schools and all children will be expected to swim during school hours in the summer, frequently in a school pool. This can be a particular problem for older Korean children who have not already learnt to swim, but there are many swimming pools which offer private tuition. Learning to swim is important for keeping children safe on the large number of accessible beaches.

Teaching and learning

Before they start school Kiwi children have been used to learning through looking, listening, talking, and doing. New Zealand teachers are encouraged to continue to build on these experiences by running programmes which acknowledge that children:

- enter school with different levels of knowledge
- learn at their own pace
- should have responsibility for initiating some of the learning and the situations in which it takes place
- learn best when they are actively involved

- need to talk about their experiences, interests, and problems
- need experiences which are enjoyable, mean something to them, and motivate them to continue learning
- need to be allowed to make mistakes or they may be too frightened to try new things.

Teachers recognise that:

- no one approach is suitable for all children or any one child all the time
- no one grouping situation is suitable for all children or for any one child all the time.

New Zealand teachers pride themselves on focusing on individual learners, so there is much less whole-class teaching than in Korea.

> The teacher takes an interest in individual children. I'm really impressed.

In New Zealand most teaching is done in small groups. Children are frequently taught in ability groups of various levels for particular subjects, for example, reading and mathematics. Your child may be in one group for reading and a different group for mathematics. Korean parents think it must be difficult for teachers to cope with so many different levels at once, but New Zealand teachers are trained to teach in this way and think it is quite normal.

Whereas Korean children would expect to sit in rows and not move from their seats, New Zealand classrooms are frequently arranged in groups of seating and children may move around the room from time to time. One Korean parent whose child had poor eyesight was pleased with this arrangement because the teacher encouraged her son to sit near the blackboard where he could see more clearly. It was as though his eyesight had suddenly improved! As well as sitting at desks, younger children sit on cushions and come together on the mat. Informal seating also allows children to work co-operatively on shared projects. The emphasis is usually on co-operation rather than competition. Co-operation can also extend across classes; one Korean parent was impressed by the way senior and junior students co-operated for an art display. However, others thought more competition would stimulate children and make them work harder.

Korean parents say one of the biggest differences between Korean and New Zealand primary schools is that the New Zealand system is child-centred whereas in Korea the education system is teacher-centred, with the teacher having great control over children.

Korean parents say that in their schools children spend much of the day listening to the teacher. Korean parents moving to New Zealand need to explain to their children that teachers and children here talk more freely to each other. Your child will be

expected to talk to the teacher as well as to listen. Children are expected to think for themselves and share their ideas with others. Children talk to other children as they work and are expected to be able to talk to a group of children. They need to practise their discussion skills.

Children must also listen in New Zealand classrooms. Some Korean parents are critical of the amount of talking New Zealand children do. Children may interrupt while the teacher is talking which is not good manners. New Zealand parents would probably agree!

Does all this mean New Zealand children don't work as hard as children in Korea? This is an impossible question to answer because the 2 systems are so different. As one parent put it:

> Children in New Zealand do not work as hard as in Korea but the work is more practical and of better quality. In Korea it is quantity rather than quality.

In Korea there is much emphasis on rote learning and memorising, whereas in New Zealand it is on children understanding what they are learning. As another parent commented:

> In Korea there would only be one answer. New Zealand teachers accept several answers to a problem.

A third parent said:

> Education in the classroom in New Zealand focuses on individuality and creativity through stimulating children's curiosity. In Korea education is more applicative, and focuses on learning to abide by rules and absorb knowledge.

The practical nature of primary schooling in New Zealand was illustrated by one Korean parent who was surprised when the children were taken to a beach and collected shells, plants, and fish for science and then took them back to the classroom. He realised such an approach introduced the children to the importance of nature and the environment. In Korea science lessons relied on books.

Respect for elders and teachers is central to Korean culture. This means there is a "distance" between teachers and pupils. There are also certain forms of etiquette which must be observed. For example, children receiving a certificate from the principal in Korea should use 2 hands. New Zealand students do not seem to be trained in these forms of respect for older people and people in authority.

Whatever the differences between the 2 systems, there is no doubt in the minds of New Zealand teachers that children from Korea are usually industrious and hardworking. There is also no doubt in the minds of Korean parents that children in New Zealand have much more freedom and do not have to work to such tight timetables and work schedules. For most Korean parents this is a desirable approach.

Discipline and punishment

New Zealand teachers try to encourage children by using praise, rewards, and positive means of reinforcement for good work, rather than punishment for poor performance. Korean parents have been surprised at how positively children are regarded and how much praise teachers use. One commented on how much his daughter's confidence had increased as a result. Another commented that in his memory teachers were "angry all the time", probably because of the stress caused by high numbers. Teachers discipline children verbally or use methods such as withdrawal of privileges, or "time out" when a child is removed from a group or class for a short period. New Zealand teachers are not permitted to use any form of physical punishment—it is illegal to hit or strap children.

The lack of violence in school playgrounds was referred to by 2 or 3 parents. One parent was surprised because she said "fighting among children in Korea is considered normal". Children are expected to resolve such problems themselves but New Zealand children report aggressive incidents to the teacher. However, several Korean parents said they were reassured to think that their children were safe at school. They gave examples of

problems with gangs demanding money in some Korean schools where "rich kids" were held to ransom. New Zealand schools are not free of bullying, but the Korean parents we spoke with certainly thought they were safe environments for children.

Parents are also expected to take responsibility for their children's behaviour. If a child does not respond to the school's discipline, a parent may be asked to come to the school and discuss the school's concern with the principal and classroom teacher.

Testing and examinations

Korean students who are used to sitting examinations every month in all subjects where students are ranked from top to bottom are surprised at the lack of examinations in New Zealand primary schools.[3] As part of the New Zealand Curriculum there are set procedures for teachers to use in regularly monitoring and assessing children's work. However, primary school children do not sit regular examinations. Children are encouraged to improve their own test scores. They are rarely ranked against each other, and it is not usual for children to be awarded prizes. Several Korean parents noted that children did receive awards at school, but these are not necessarily for good academic performance, as would be the case in Korea. At primary level awards in New Zealand are for individual progress and to encourage morale. In Korea the students with the highest marks are the best students. In New Zealand, teachers try to recognise the abilities of all students, including those who do not do well academically. Korean parents express surprise at the lack of prizes for first and second place, and for attendance. While several Korean parents felt children would not work so hard without regular examinations, others acknowledged that frequent examinations added greatly to daily stress in Korean classrooms. Competition between pupils was so strong it could lead to violence amongst pupils. These parents were pleased with the more relaxed atmosphere in New Zealand schools.

Homework

Korean parents usually like their children to have homework and may think there is insufficient work set to do at home in New Zealand. It is common in our schools for junior school children to bring home reading books which parents are encouraged to read with their children. From about the age of 7 they may also bring home other tasks such as spelling words to be memorised or, in some cases, homework sheets to be completed. Older children may have assignments related to school projects. No primary or intermediate school is likely to set regular daily homework in all subjects as is common in Korea. Homework practices do vary considerably between schools. You should discuss this with your child's teacher. If you would like your child to

[3] Changes in the Korean system mean that from 1997 there will be no examinations at the primary school level.

have extra reading practice, there should be plenty of books available through the school. Most districts also have good public libraries and children can join from birth.

It is common in Korea for children to have extra coaching after school from quite a young age. While New Zealand parents who have children with specific learning problems may also arrange for private coaching, it is unusual for children of primary school age to have extra coaching in school subjects. Korean children also take part in more organised after-school activities such as music lessons than is probably the case with young New Zealand children. However, New Zealand children also join sports clubs and have music and ballet lessons after school and at the weekends. Many Koreans think that New Zealand children seem to have a lot of free time. One parent, surprised by the lack of organised activities for children after school, was disappointed.

> There's such a shortage of things for children to do. There's just empty land!

This comment might puzzle some New Zealand parents, many of whom expect their children to make their own fun.

School buildings and equipment

It may take a while for you to get used to the appearance of New Zealand primary schools. They usually comprise a series of wooden buildings and are, of course, much smaller than Korean schools. The buildings are usually set in quite extensive grounds where children are free to play.

Korean parents may be disappointed at the minimal computer and electronic equipment available in most schools. New Zealand cannot support a large electronic industry similar to Korea's. A small population means a small market. Our school system is supported by well-trained and dedicated teachers, but schools are not physically as well resourced as those in Korea.

School expenses

Most Korean parents found New Zealand primary schools were "not too expensive". However, they were expected to buy things which they would not be expected to in Korea.

Almost all schools in New Zealand will ask parents to make a donation to help them to provide extra services to students. These donations are commonly called "school fees" but this does not alter the fact that payment of them is voluntary and cannot be made compulsory. The level of the school donation is a matter for each school to decide, and the amounts vary markedly from school to school.

In New Zealand, schools regularly use class sets of books which are reused by many different groups of children. In Korea children buy their own books and rarely use secondhand books.

However, the greatest expense for parents in Korea was the amount of money they inevitably had to spend on extra coaching and out-of-school classes for their children which made the Korean system generally more expensive than the New Zealand system.

Parents and primary schools

Korean parents are surprised at the number of activities they are invited to be involved in.

Parents in New Zealand are encouraged to be actively involved in primary schools. There are many ways this may happen. Sometimes parents act as helpers in the classroom or school library. They are likely to be involved on class trips which are a regular feature of classroom programmes in New Zealand. Working parents naturally find it difficult to help in this way, as do some parents with other young children. Korean parents are usually surprised at the number of activities they are invited to be involved in. Those who lack confidence in their English may be reluctant to help but it is an excellent way to get to know your child's school if you can join in.

It may also be a good way to help you improve your English. Korean parents with limited English can be worried that teachers think they are not interested in what goes on at school. As one Korean parent put it:

> I want to help with my heart but I am embarrassed because of my poor English.

Some Korean parents get involved by preparing materials for the school about Korean culture. Schools are likely to welcome any Korean materials you can provide which will help other children understand Korean society. Korean parents who have helped at the school say this has made them feel more comfortable with the principal and classroom teachers which means they feel free to talk about their child's education.

All the Korean parents we spoke to said they felt welcome at the school. They find New Zealand schools friendly, welcoming places. There is less distance between the principal, teachers, and parents than there would be in Korea. Korean parents are impressed that even the principal knows the names of the children at the school. For their part, New Zealand teachers are impressed with how committed Korean parents are to the education of their children and appreciate the support they give to their children and to the school. It is very clear to New Zealand teachers that Korean parents want their children to do well and that they would like to be active supporters of the school. One principal summarised her attitude towards Korean parents by saying:

> They are lovely parents. Koreans have brought a new dimension to our school. We would welcome any number of Korean families because they are so supportive of their children and the school, and the children are so keen to learn.

Korean parents find that in New Zealand they play a different role in relation to their children's schooling from in Korea. As one father put it:

In Korea, the school takes almost full responsibility for child education and, in general, parents are not involved in school matters. In New Zealand education is considered as co-operation between parents and school.

In Korea it is usual for mothers to make all decisions related to the children's education and much time is spent supervising their children's education and arranging for the best tutors for extra coaching. In New Zealand, Korean mothers may suddenly have much less to do.

- Firstly, if their husband is more proficient in English, he may have more contact with the school, particularly if he is not employed full time. The role of the mother can decrease while that of the father increases.
- Secondly, the curriculum and style of learning in New Zealand are different so the mother is less able to help her children. Typically the children's English quickly outstrips the mother's so that she finds it difficult to help. Whereas in Korea children can usually find the answers to homework questions at the end of textbooks, in New Zealand by the time they are at intermediate school children have to do independent research. The mother may find her only role is in transporting her children to the library.
- Thirdly, there is much less need to arrange for extra tuition in New Zealand, so there is less pressure on the mother.

Most schools send newsletters home to keep parents informed about school activities. A few schools where there are a number of Korean families have arranged for newsletters

to be translated into Korean but this is not easy because of the need to have Korean characters on computers. If you are able to help you might like to talk with the school principal about this. Most schools have "meet-the-teacher" evenings early in the year to talk about their class programme. Fathers as well as mothers are welcome to come to the school and discuss the class programme with the teacher. In many schools, parent meetings are also held after school reports are sent home. At this time you should have an opportunity to discuss your child's progress. However, it is also possible for you to talk with your teacher about your child at other times. It is advisable to ring and make an appointment first, although sometimes informal spontaneous short discussions are also possible before and after normal school hours.

New Zealand reports are rather different from those parents would receive in Korea. In Korea there are many subjects and parents expect their child to receive marks for all of them. It should be noted that more recently Korean reports do not have marks for subjects but carry brief comments on subjects and child development. New Zealand reports contain many more comments. (A sample of a typical primary school report form is included in diagram 2.) Student marks will be recorded in teachers' own record books but marks are not usually put on reports. Your child's teacher will probably discuss her records of your child's marks with you during a parent-teacher interview. Parents have a legal right to see teachers' records of their children's work if they wish to do so. In some classes children will bring home a work book or portfolio each week which shows the work covered and student progress.

Diagram 2
SAMPLE PRIMARY SCHOOL REPORT FORM

Name ..... Year level ..... Room .....

KEY: C = Consistently, U = Usually, S = Sometimes, NY = Not Yet		C	U	S	NY
Writing	Uses a variety of styles				
	Proof reads and edits work				
	Uses a wide range of vocabulary				
	Sentences are correctly structured				
	Uses punctuation accurately				
Handwriting and Spelling	Independently corrects own errors				
	Uses spelling aids				
	Forms letters accurately				
	Writes with fluency and speed				
Listening and Speaking Māori	Speaks clearly and confidently				
	Contributes to class and group discussion				
	Listens and responds to others thoughtfully				
	Responds to basic Māori commands and greetings				
	Displays a knowledge of tikanga and protocol				
Reading	Shows enthusiasm for recreational reading				
	Uses a range of strategies to make sense of text				
	Finds, selects and uses information effectively				

KEY: C = Consistently, U = Usually, S = Sometimes, NY = Not Yet		C	U	S	NY
Mathematics	Displays sound knowledge of basic facts and concepts				
	Communicates mathematical ideas using appropriate language				
	Uses a range of strategies to solve problems				
Social Studies and Science	Gathers and presents information using a variety of communication skills				
	Shares ideas and opinions				
	Able to conduct an inquiry				
	Demonstrates respect for the environment				
Technology	Uses a variety of computer programmes confidently and independently				
	Is capable of demonstrating mathematical concepts				
Health & Physical Wellbeing	Displays a positive attitude to fitness				
	Demonstrates a range of basic physical skills				
	Participates co-operatively				
	Understands basic hygiene and requirements for healthy living				
	Displays a knowledge of basic safety routines in their environment				
The Arts	Displays creativity and originality				
	Works in a variety of art media with confidence				
	Can objectively discuss their own and other work				
	Participates fully in all musical activities				
	Can read and play simple melodies and rhythm patterns				

		C	U	S	NY
Social skills	Works and co-operates well with others				
	Shows respect for opinions and property of others				
	Demonstrates responsibility and self control				
	Shows initiative				
	Displays leadership qualities				
	Participates keenly in 'total' school programme				
Work and study skills	Listens to and follows instructions				
	Settles to work quickly				
	Works independently				
	Shows perseverance				
	Takes pride in presentation of work				
	Evaluates own work				

General Comments and Action Points

Teacher ..... Date .....

Principal ..... Date .....

This report evaluates each pupil on individual achievements and needs, both socially and academically

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New Zealand and Korean childrearing practices

She [Korean parent] concluded that New Zealand parents were very like Korean parents in that they were keen for their children to do well and put much time and effort into supporting them.

We asked the Korean parents whether they thought there were many differences between New Zealand and Korean childrearing practices.[4] This was a difficult question because most Korean parents had not had the opportunity to observe New Zealanders in their homes. Any knowledge they had of how New Zealanders rear their children was from what they had observed in shops or parks. Their views were also based on the childrearing practices of middle-class Pakeha families because these families predominate in the areas where most Koreans settle.

Some contrasts

One thing that had struck a number of Korean parents was that New Zealand parents would discipline their children in front of others whereas Koreans would wait until they were in the privacy of their own home. Several said how surprised they were to see New Zealanders smack their children in public which is something a Korean parent would never do. However, they also think Korean parents are much more inclined to use physical punishment than New Zealanders. Corporal punishment is frowned upon by many New Zealanders who are more likely to control children verbally, using persuasion and logical argument, whereas smacking children is quite acceptable to most Koreans. New Zealand childrearing methods encourage more self-discipline than Korean methods. One Korean parent, who thought that this was the case, said that Korean parents in general yield to their children's demands if they insist on something. Now, thanks to his experience at school, their son is more willing to listen to his parents, particularly over things like going to bed at an earlier hour. Other parents confirmed that they thought the methods used by New Zealand parents to discipline their children were in the long run more effective than the more authoritarian approach of Korean parents which led to children becoming "wild and violent."

One Korean mother who had attended a playcentre with her 2-year-old daughter had had more opportunity than most to observe other New Zealand parents with their children. One thing that surprised her was how Kiwi parents respected the opinions of children, even the youngest children, whereas Korean parents always tried to control their children.

[4] New Zealand teachers interested in Korean childrearing practices might like to read a recent publication, *Korean Children*, by M D Butterworth and S-H Choi.

She also thought Kiwi parents were less anxious to protect their children than Korean parents. Kiwi parents encourage their children to have many practical experiences and to take risks. As an example, she said Korean parents would not let their children touch hot water. They would say "don't touch" without necessarily giving an explanation. New Zealand parents would be more inclined to let children experiment and find out more for themselves, without endangering their safety. New Zealand parents think it is important to let children learn how to do things for themselves and not to do everything for them.

It is quite hard for Korean parents to get used to children having plenty of time to play and being able to play freely. Korean mothers were more inclined than Kiwi mothers to worry about their children getting dirty. New Zealand parents don't even seem to mind if children put paint in their mouths! They dress their young children in casual, practical clothes. Korean children may persuade their parents that they too want to be more casually dressed because even at a young age they quickly learn that expensive, fancy clothes make them stand out.

Another Korean parent with an 11-year-old daughter had observed New Zealand parents through her daughter's membership of both a water polo group and as a violinist in a young persons' philharmonic orchestra. She had concluded that New Zealand parents were very like Korean parents in that they were keen for their children to do well and put much time and effort into supporting them. However, New Zealand parents encouraged their children to be independent and while they took pride in their children's achievements they did not push their children to succeed as most parents do in Korea, nor did they suffer the same "loss of face" as Korean parents if their children did not do well.

New Zealand parents were really only concerned about their own children. Korean parents were much more aware of other people's children because they were so competitive. In her view, Korean parents were more relaxed with their children in New Zealand because there was not the same pressure for their children to be high achievers. Another Korean parent did not think New Zealand parents sacrificed themselves for their children's education, but in Korea they did, frequently.

The teacher's perspective

The teachers we spoke to said how well Korean children settled in at kindergartens and schools because they are so polite and hardworking. However, several teachers spoke about aspects of Korean childrearing which they thought caused difficulties in kindergartens and schools. Korean children appeared to be so used to having their time planned for them that they were not always good at organising themselves in a less structured environment. Korean boys could cause problems in a classroom because they were particularly dominant and demanding in their behaviour. They also touched much more in play than New Zealand children—pushing, shoving, knocking things over, and slapping. Some of this behaviour may be caused by frustration if children lack sufficient English language skills to make themselves readily understood.

Teachers also said it was sometimes hard to get Korean children, particularly boys, to clean up after themselves because they were used to having that done for them and found it demeaning. Several Korean parents said how impressed they were with the fact that children at kindergartens were trained to clean up materials they had played with.

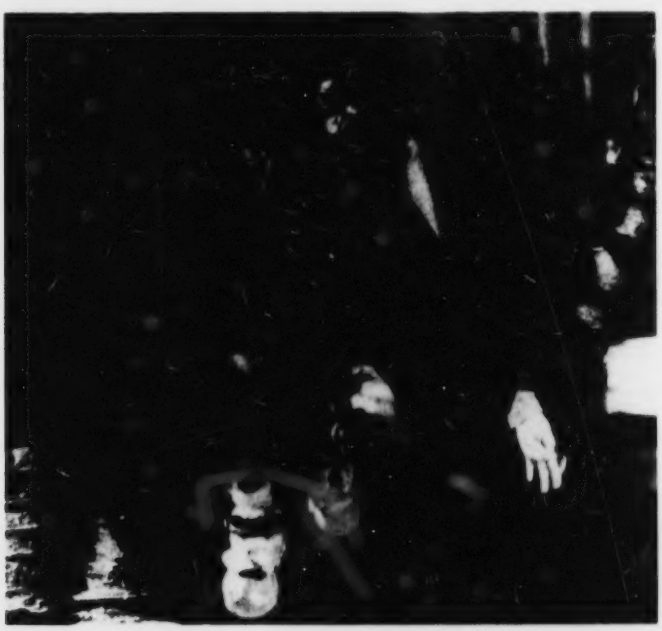
Respect for elders

Korean children are taught to respect their elders. In Korea, a child talking to an older person is expected to lower their eyes and not look at them directly. Whereas Korean children are taught to bow to their teacher as a sign of respect, New Zealand preschoolers may be encouraged to use their teacher's first name. It is common for Koreans to wonder if the less formal relationship between teachers and children in New Zealand leads to casual attitudes and lack of respect.

Koreans in New Zealand can be shocked by what they consider to be New Zealand children's lack of respect to adults. Koreans who own shops, for example, are worried by the unruly behaviour of New Zealand teenagers and concerned about the impact on their own children.

A general comment

While not all parents we interviewed had much to say about New Zealand childrearing practices, they often did have comments to make about other aspects of New Zealand society. One in particular was the use made of the unemployment and domestic purposes benefit. All those who commented were critical, believing adults should support themselves and their families. There is a link to childrearing practices in the sense that Koreans feel strongly that families are responsible for themselves and should not be dependent on state handouts.



Is moving to New Zealand the best solution for you and your children?

Although there are problems in moving to a new country, once the settling-in difficulties have been resolved the benefits outweigh the problems.

We can't answer that question for you. What we can say is that many of the Koreans we interviewed said how important it was for other Koreans considering coming to New Zealand to think through the issues very carefully. It was not enough, they said, to have some vague idea that New Zealand has a clean environment, and that the education system is reputedly a good one.

Employment

It is important not to underestimate the difficulty many well-educated and skilled Koreans have had in finding employment in New Zealand. This has serious repercussions on the family. In some cases it has resulted in families being split while the father returns to Korea to find work. Some Korean families are also concerned about future employment opportunities for their children. Women are often affected because they too cannot find employment to make use of their high levels of educational and professional training. With poor English skills, no job, and little contact with New Zealand women, Korean women can be very lonely. One mother who felt the family had made the wrong decision said she had not realised until she came to New Zealand how much she loved her own country. As well as missing her extended family, she particularly missed the mountains of Korea.

Language

The importance of all family members learning English has been stressed several times in this booklet. While many of the parents we talked with were making an effort to improve their English, this was not always easy. Some were using tapes and videos in their home. Others were attending community classes which are inexpensive but not intensive. More intensive courses are available but tuition fees are high. One parent spoke forcibly about how, in her opinion, if the New Zealand government encouraged migrants to come to the country, English classes should be free, as she believed they were in Australia. Whatever your views, it would obviously be best for you and your family to have made a start at learning English, spoken as well as written, before you arrive in New Zealand.

Cultures

You may be considering moving to New Zealand because of the educational opportunities for your children, but schools have to be seen in a wider social context. Changed government policies have led to a rapid influx of immigrants to New Zealand. New Zealanders are not used to coping with large numbers of new arrivals from different cultures. New Zealand may be geographically close to Asia but Pakeha New Zealanders are culturally and emotionally closer to Europe. New Zealanders are not necessarily well informed about the different countries of origin of new settlers. Koreans may be lumped together in the minds of most New Zealanders with all other Asians, particularly Chinese. This fact has also had repercussions on the long-established New Zealand Chinese community, made up of families whose forebears came to New Zealand in the 1860s. Now well established in New Zealand, some have distanced themselves from new arrivals because they fear a racist revival. (*See*, for example, Manying Ip's book *Dragons on the Long White Cloud*.)

Some New Zealanders undoubtedly do have racist attitudes. However, a recent study by two New Zealanders of Asian origin, one of them Korean (*see* Vasil & Yoon, 1996) concludes that although there are

> . . . undeniably incidents of personal ill-treatment and racial discrimination . . . not many New Zealanders are hostile to immigrants from Asia. Many New Zealanders are helpful to them and treat them with consideration, friendliness and understanding. This is reflected in the attitude of immigrants from Asia: on the whole, most of them feel quite comfortable in New Zealand and are essentially satisfied with the way they are treated by the host community. (p. 54)

At least one Auckland school, recognising that the government policy on immigration has resulted in a changed ethnic composition of the school roll, has developed a New New Zealanders policy. Realising that there was potential for racial conflicts in the school and community through lack of understanding, they have developed a policy designed among other things to:

> provide an environment of mutual respect and understanding among the various cultures of the community.
>
> enable new New Zealanders to integrate as fully as possible into the New Zealand community fully sharing educational opportunities.

One practical aspect of the school programme is the buddy system for children, which has already been referred to (*see* p. 13). This system has been extended to the adults as well. Local families are encouraged to "look out" for a new family and act as "good neighbours", helping them to understand the local school and community. New Zealand

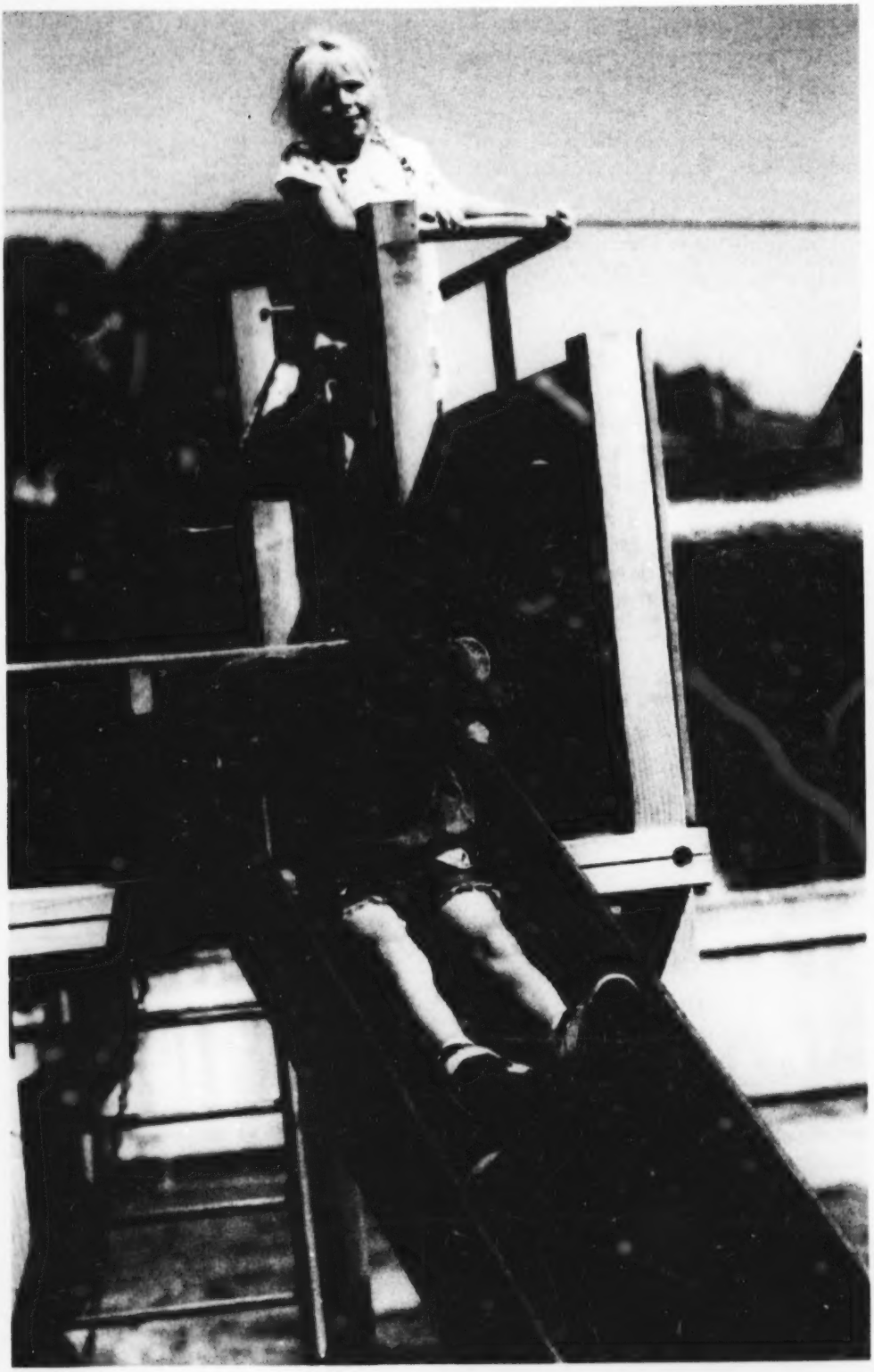
families are frequently mobile so they have some knowledge of what it is like to move into a new community and settle into a new school, although this is obviously not as traumatic as moving into a new society.

Another problem for Koreans may be that although they find their country overcrowded and polluted, New Zealand's emptiness by contrast can be depressing. Korean families used to eating out and shopping in the evenings can find New Zealand cities dull. Koreans are family orientated but they do not just go home in the evenings as most New Zealanders do. Where is all the night life and the shops open for evening trading? A smaller population may mean less stimulation. The lifestyle is so different. One woman summed up her attitude by saying:

> Seoul is an interesting hell. Auckland is a boring paradise!

Other Koreans advise that if a family decides to settle in New Zealand it is important that they have very clear goals as to why they have decided to make the move, and be prepared for some settling-in problems. Once the move has been made it is not always easy to return to Korea. Children who are removed from the Korean education system might find it difficult to return to Korea and fit into the system where they had left off.

However, our overall impression was that most Korean families felt very positive about their move to New Zealand, and were particularly satisfied with the experiences their children were having at school. They may have hoped that New Zealanders would make more effort to understand Koreans—understanding is a two-way process—but they were pleased with how well their children had settled in at school. They emphasised that we were all part of the human race, and that our similarities were more important than our differences. There were inevitable problems in moving to a new country, particularly one with a different language, but once the initial settling-in difficulties had been resolved the benefits far outweighed the problems.



Glossary

[Page numbers are where the term is first used]

ability groups	small groups of children who are at the same level in a subject are taught together (p. 25)
board of trustees	group of people, mainly parents, elected to govern a school (p. 8)
charter	document which sets out the aims and objectives of a school (p. 18)
community classes	classes run by community groups, secondary schools, or polytechnics (p. 39)
enrolment scheme	scheme used in overcrowded schools to control roll numbers (p. 8); some examples of enrolment criteria are listed on p. 8
independent research	children often have to seek out information for school projects by themselves using, for example, public libraries, or perhaps the Internet (p. 32)
integrated curriculum	curriculum in which connections are made between subjects, in contrast to the Korean system in which subjects are kept separate (p. 21)
integrated school	schools which were set up as private (fee-paying) schools but which have been progressively brought into the state education system (p. 8)
intermediate school	in certain areas there are schools for children in the last 2 years of primary education (forms 1 and 2; years 7 and 8) (p. 15; *see also* p. 17)
Kiwi	an informal name for a New Zealander (p. vi)
legal right	a parent is entitled by law to see a teacher's record of their child's work (p. 33)
less structured environment	less rigid, more informal way of organising class activities (p. 37)
lunch schemes	system where child can order, and pay for, food to be eaten at lunchtime (p. 15)
meet-the-teacher evening	an opportunity for parents to go to the school in the evening and talk to the teacher about the class programme (p. 33)
migrant settlement service fee	fee paid by migrants on entry to New Zealand, part of which is used to assist schools to provide language tuition or specialist training for teachers of non-English-speaking students (p. 9)
New Zealander	term used in this book to describe people with New Zealand resident status (p. vi)
on the mat	young children sometimes sit informally on a mat on the floor to listen to stories or work together (p. 25)
open plan	one large space, divided into areas for different teaching purposes (rather than separate rooms) (p. 17)

Pakeha	term to describe a non-Maori New Zealander (p. vi)
portfolio	folder containing work covered and student progress (p.33)
school fees	voluntary donation requested from parents to help provide extra services for pupils; amount varies from school to school (p. 29)
specific learning problems	term used to describe a particular difficulty (for example, dyslexia) which might impede a child's learning and for which a parent might seek help beyond the school (p. 29)
state handouts	money (benefit) provided by the government to people in need of support at certain times, such as illness or unemployment (p. 38)
syndicate	groupings of classes within larger main sections, mainly for curriculum purposes (p. 17)
teacher professional development	extra and ongoing training of teachers to develop their skills and knowledge after initial training (p. 9)
time out	brief period during which a troublesome pupil is removed from class to settle down (p. 27)
Treaty of Waitangi	founding document of New Zealand signed in 1840 between certain Maori chiefs and representatives and Queen Victoria (p. 20)

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